

5        establishing a current system state of the controller related to a previous  
6        system state of the controller that was in effect after a previous use of the  
7        controller by the first user and before a use of the controller by a second user; and  
8        providing access to functionality of a consumer device by use of the  
9        controller;  
10       wherein said access is dependent upon the bio-metric input;  
11       wherein said use of the controller by the second user caused the controller  
12       to have a system state different than the previous system state.

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1        2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the bio-metric user-identification input  
2        component is a fingerprint pad.

1        3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the controller is a hand-held controller.

1        4. The method of Claim 3, wherein the controller comprises a display area,  
2        and further comprising the step of displaying on the display area data representing  
3        available functions to be executed.

1        5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the bio-metric user-identification input  
2        component is a microphone.

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1        6. (Amended) The method of Claim 5, wherein the bio-metric input is voice  
2        data, and wherein the voice data is received after the controller is prepared for  
3        input in response to a request to process the voice data.

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1        7. The method of Claim 5, wherein the controller is a hand-held controller.

1        8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the controller comprises a display area,  
2        and further comprising the step of displaying on the display area data representing  
3        available functions to be executed.

1           9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the consumer device is a television.

1           11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the controller comprises a display  
2 area, and further comprising the step of displaying on the display area data  
3 representing the current system state.

1           12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the controller comprises a plurality of  
2 physical actuating buttons.

1           13. The method of Claim 1, wherein the current system state is  
2 substantially identical to the previous system state.

1           14. The method of Claim 1, wherein the current system state is identical  
2 to the previous system state.

1           15. The method of Claim 1, wherein the current system state prevents use  
2 of the controller for accessing pay-per-view programming.

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1           17. (Amended) A controller comprising:  
2 a bio-metric input component; and  
3 a graphical display;  
4 wherein the controller, upon log-on thereto by a first user, is programmed  
5 to enter a current system state related to a previous system state of the controller  
6 that was in effect after a previous use of the controller by the first user and before  
7 a use of the controller by a second user, both uses occurring before said log-on;  
8 wherein said log-on occurs in response to the first user inputting bio-metric  
9 input into the bio-metric input component.

1           18. The controller of Claim 17, wherein the bio-metric input component is  
2 a fingerprint pad, and the bio-metric input comprises a fingerprint pattern.

1           19. The controller of Claim 17, wherein the bio-metric input component is  
2 a microphone, and the bio-metric input comprises voice data.

1           20. The controller of Claim 17 wherein the controller is a hand-held  
2 controller.

1           21. The controller of Claim 17, further comprising a plurality of physical  
2 actuating buttons.

1           22. The controller of Claim 17, wherein the current system state is  
2 substantially identical to the previous system state.

1           23. The controller of Claim 17, wherein the controller is programmed to  
2 display a representation of the current system state on the display.

1           24. The controller of Claim 17, wherein the current system state prevents  
2 use of the controller for accessing pay-per-view programming.

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1           27. (Amended) A method of accessing functionality of a consumer device  
2 comprising the steps:  
3           determining an identity of a first user in response to bio-metric input  
4 supplied by the first user to a controller;  
5           establishing a first system state of the controller, said first system state  
6 being associated with said identity;  
7           providing access to a first set of functionality of a consumer device by use  
8 of the controller, said access being dependent upon the identity of the first user;  
9 and  
10          switching to a second system state from the first system state at a time  
11 calculated by an algorithm which incorporates at least one factor other than the  
12 passage of a certain amount of time.

1           28. The method of Claim 27, wherein the second system state prevents  
2 use of the controller for accessing pay-per-view programming.

1           29. The method of Claim 27, wherein the second system state allows use  
2 of the controller for conducting e-commerce transactions via the Internet.

1           31. The method of Claim 30, wherein the display is on the controller.

1           32. The method of Claim 27 wherein the consumer device is a set-top box.

1           33. The method of Claim 27, wherein the at least one factor is the identity  
2 of the first user.

1           34. The method of Claim 27, wherein the at least one factor is a category  
2 of use associated with the consumer device.

1           35. The method of Claim 27, wherein the at least one factor is a subject  
2 matter of activity within a category of use associated with the consumer device.

1           36. The method of Claim 27 wherein the second system state is associated  
2 with a second set of functionality different than the first set of functionality.

1           37. The method of Claim 27, wherein the second system state is  
2 associated with an identity of a second user.

as 1           38. (Amended) A method of accessing functionality of a consumer device  
2 comprising the steps:  
3           determining an identity of a first user in response to bio-metric input  
4 supplied by the first user to a controller;

5            establishing a first system state of the controller, said first system state  
6            being associated with said identity;  
7            providing access to a first set of functionality of a consumer device by use  
8            of the controller, said access being dependent upon the identity of the first user;  
9            and  
10           switching to a second system state from the first system state in response  
11           to a predetermined amount of time passing after establishing the first system state,  
12           said second system state being related to a previous system state of the controller  
13           that was in effect after a previous use of the controller by a second user which  
14           occurred prior to establishing the first system state.

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1           39. The method of Claim 38, wherein the second system state is  
2           substantially identical to the previous system state.

1           40. The method of Claim 38, wherein the second system state is a default  
2           system state.

1           41. The method of Claim 38, wherein the predetermined amount of time  
2           is calculated by an algorithm which incorporates at least one factor other than the  
3           passage of a certain amount of time.

1           42. The method of Claim 41, wherein the other factor is the identity of the  
2           first user.

1           43. The method of Claim 41, wherein the at least one factor is a category  
2           of use associated with the consumer device.

1           44. The method of Claim 41, wherein the at least one factor is a subject  
2           matter of activity with a category of activity associated with the consumer device.

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1 45. (New) A method of accessing functionality of a consumer device  
2 comprising the steps:  
3 determining an identity of a first user in response to a bio-metric input  
4 supplied by the first user to a controller;  
5 establishing a first system state of the controller, said first system state  
6 being associated with said identity;  
7 providing access to a first set of functionality of a consumer device by use  
8 of the controller, said access being dependent upon the identity of the first user;  
9 and  
10 establishing a second system state of the controller in response to a second  
11 bio-metric input supplied by the first user to the controller, wherein said second  
12 system state is associated with a group user identity;  
13 providing access to a second set of functionality of a consumer device by  
14 use of the controller, said access being dependent upon the group user identity;  
15 wherein said second bio-metric input is supplied by the first user prior to  
16 another bio-metric input being supplied to the controller by a different user;  
17 wherein the first user is associated with said group user identity.

1 46. (New) The method of Claim 45, wherein the bio-metric input component  
2 is a fingerprint pad.

1 47. (New) The method of Claim 45, wherein the controller is a hand-held  
2 controller.

1 48. (New) The method of Claim 47, wherein the controller comprises a  
2 display area, and further comprising the step of displaying on the display area data  
3 representing available functions to be executed.

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1 49. (New) A method of allowing access to functionality of a consumer device  
2 comprising the steps:

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3 receiving a bio-metric input of a first user into a bio-metric user-identification  
4 input component of a controller;  
5 establishing a current system state of the controller similar to a previous  
6 system state of the controller that was in effect after a previous use of the controller  
7 by the first user and before a use of the controller by a second user; and  
8 providing access to functionality of a consumer device by use of the  
9 controller;  
10 wherein said access is dependent upon the bio-metric input;  
11 wherein said use of the controller by the second user caused the controller  
12 to have a system state different than the previous system state.

1 50. (New) The method of Claim 15 wherein the current system state  
2 prevents use of the controller for accessing pay-per-view programming by a time-  
3 out feature or a lock feature.

1 51. (New) A method of accessing functionality of a consumer device  
2 comprising the steps:  
3 receiving a bio-metric input of a first user into a bio-metric user-identification  
4 input component of a controller;  
5 establishing a current system state of the controller similar to a previous  
6 system state of the controller that was in effect after a previous use of the controller  
7 by the first user and before a use of the controller by a second user; and  
8 providing access to functionality of a consumer device by use of the  
9 controller;  
10 wherein said access is dependent upon the bio-metric input;  
11 wherein said use of the controller by the second user caused the controller  
12 to have a system state similar to the previous system state.

1 52. (New) A method of accessing functionality of a consumer device  
2 comprising the steps: